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REMARKS:

Claims 5-12 have been cancelled without prejudice. Thus, claims 1-4 and 13-17 are currently pending.

The Examiner rejected claim 17 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, for not providing sufficient antecedent basis for the limitation "said plurality." In response, the applicant has amended claim 17 as indicated above to include after the words "said plurality" the language "of longitudinal ribs connecting the inner and outer sleeves." Since the added language is recited in the claim from which claim 17 depends, this rejection is believed to have been obviated.

Citing 35 U.S.C. 102(b), the Examiner has rejected claims 9, 10, 13 and 14 as being anticipated by Bowman (U.S. Patent No. 3,515,417). As claims 9 and 10 have been cancelled, only claims 13 and 14 will be addressed. The Bowman reference discloses a self-centering bushing having a plurality of flexible splines on the outer surface that contact the inner surface of a bore into which the bushing is placed.

In contrast, the invention of claims 13 and 14 relates to a stirrup bushing that includes an inner sleeve, longitudinal fins extending radially from the inner sleeve, and an outer sleeve enveloping the longitudinal fins. Indeed, the fins of claims 13 and 14 connect the inner and outer sleeves of the bushing. According to the American Heritage Dictionary, Second College Edition, the meaning of connect is "to join or fasten together." Clearly, the fins of Bowman merely *contact* a

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bore that is not part of the bushing. In other words, Bowman's fins do not join or fasten an inner sleeve and an outer sleeve of a bushing as pictured, described, and claimed by the applicant.

Because Bowman neither discloses nor suggests the connection of his bushing's fins with an outer sleeve, independent claim 13 and dependent claim 14 are believed to be distinguished from the Bowman patent.

Of the claims that remain pending, the Examiner rejected claims 1-4 and 15-17 as obvious under 35 U.S.C. 103 based on the Bowman reference above in view of Hsi-Chang (U.S. Patent No. 6,220,004). In response, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of former claim 5 in that claim 1 now recites, in relevant part, "and an outer sleeve connected to said fins." Thus claim 1 and all claims depending therefrom clearly recite an element that is completely absent from the Bowman reference: an outer sleeve connected to fins.

The present invention lies in the idea of providing voids in the structure of the bushing, such that compressive forces are relieved through deformation, rather than contained in a fixed geometry that produces deterioration of the material. On the other hand, the bushings 48 and 52 of Hsi-Chang's stirrup are specifically designed to limit rotation of the footrest (see col. 5, lines 1-9). Replacing Hsi-Chang's bushings with that of Bowman would completely eliminate the rotation-limiting function. Thus, there is no suggestion, and there would be no motivation, to combine Bowman's bushing with Hsi-Chang's stirrup. Accordingly, claims 1-4 and 14-17 cannot be obvious in view of the cited references.

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In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-4 and 13-17 recite allowable subject matter. Accordingly, the applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the rejections.

Should there remain any outstanding issues or questions amenable to resolution by telephonic conference, the undersigned attorney would welcome and appreciate the opportunity to discuss the case.

No fee is believed to be due with this response. Should there be any unforeseen costs, please charge our Deposit Account No. 17-0055.

Respectfully submitted,

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